It was a cold, cold winter’s night. In a cottage in the country, tucked away beneath the hills, a little boy lay sleeping. Snow began to fall, lightly at first, and then with giant flakes which started to settle on the ground.

At first light of morning, the little boy turned over, yawned, and sat up. He ran to the window and looked out. Everything was covered in snow – the garden, the fields, and the distant hills.

He got dressed as fast as he could. When he was ready, he hurried down the stairs. At the back door, he put on his boots, his scarf, and his wooly hat, and walked out into the snow.

First of all, he thought, I’ll make some giant footsteps. Above him was a branch of a tree. He jumped up and swung on it. The snow from the branch fell all over him. Then he made a snow-ball and threw it as hard as he possibly could... straight into the kitchen window. “You do something else”, said his mother.

The little boy wandered off, wondering what to do, and it was at exactly this moment that he got the idea of building a snowman.
He built a great column of snow the size of a man and a great big snowball to go on top of it. Then he fetched a scarf and a hat, a tangerine for the nose, and coal for the eyes. At last, the snowman was finished, and the boy stepped back and looked at him. He seemed to be smiling.

By this time, it was getting dark, and the little boy had to go indoors, leaving the snowman standing all alone out in the middle of the garden. Up the stairs he went, two at a time. Into the bathroom to clean his teeth, then hop-step-and-jump along the landing to his bed. Soon, he was in bed and asleep.

In the middle of the night he woke, tiptoed to the window and peered down at the snowman, shivering. He went back to bed, but then the clock woke him. This time, he got up and tiptoed down the stairs, feeling rather cold. He looked out at the snowman through the glass panels of the front door. Suddenly, while the boy was looking at him, the snowman moved and he actually started to walk towards the boy. He stopped, and raised his hand. Then he walked forward again, right up to the boy, and they shook hands. “Come in”, said the boy. “I’d love to”, said the snowman.

* fetched – got, grabbed
* tangerine – a fruit, orange-like but smaller
* indoors – inside
* the landing – space between floors in a staircase
* peered down at – looked down at
* shivering – shaking from cold
Together, they tiptoed into the living room. The snowman thought it was wonderful. He looked at the cat sleeping peacefully by the fire and wanted to stroke it. But when the cat saw the snowman, he was terrified and leapt into the air. The snowman jumped backward and lurched into the Christmas tree, setting all the little bells ringing, the candles shaking, and the fairy wobbling. At last, it settled down and the boy plugged it in. The tree lit up with every color you could think of. Blues and greens, reds and yellows, gold lights and silver lights.

Then the snowman walked away from the Christmas tree and sat himself down in a comfortable armchair. The boy turned on the television. There was nothing but fuzzy lines and zigzags, and it made the snowman dizzy. Then, with a start, the boy realized that the snowman was sitting too near the fire. He realized he might melt if he got too hot, so he pulled him out of the chair and hurried him out of the room, to the kitchen, which was cold and dark. The boy reached for the light switch. The snowman was curious. He wanted to switch it on himself.
The snowman plodded over to the kitchen sink, and the boy climbed up and turned on the cold tap. Then the hot one as well. A big cloud of steam rose up. Steam! It was too hot for the snowman, and he backed away.

He saw a cake with a tiny model snowman on it, picked it up, and smiled. Then he took fruit from a bowl and tried on an orange for a nose, then a lemon, a banana, then cherry, then a huge pineapple. But his own tangerine fitted best so he put it back on. He leaned down, opened the fridge, and a waft of cold air came out. The snowman loved it. For him, it was just like sunbathing.

“Let’s go upstairs”, said the boy, up they went, and paused outside his parents’ room. Someone was snoring. “Be very quiet”, said the boy. “Shhh”. “Look false teeth”, whispered the boy. The snowman wanted to try them on. He put them on and walked to a mirror to see how they looked. It gave him a terrible fright. Next, he tried out some makeup, and looked in the mirror again. He looked into the wardrobe and saw all the clothes hanging up there, and some hats. Then he tried on some trousers, but the braces caught over his nose. “Do be careful”, said the boy. “We mustn’t wake them!”
A perfume spray stood on the dressing table. The snowman squirted it. He liked that. He did it again. Suddenly, the perfume made him want to sneeze. He held his nose. He mustn’t sneeze in the bedroom. The boy hurried him out of the room. And then... he sneezed.

In the boy’s playroom was a music box. They wound it up and danced to it. At the end of the dance, they both collapsed on the floor, with balloons and teddy bears all around them. “I’ve got another idea now”, said the boy. “Come with me, and look out of the window”. Outside, they could see a strange, dark object. Nodding to each other, they tiptoed silently down the stairs. Out through the front door, and into the open air. The dark object seemed much bigger now they were close to it and whatever it was was covered up with a big, black tarpaulin. Summoning up all his strength, the boy went up and pulled it off. Standing there was a bright, shiny, new motorbike. The boy pointed out the controls to the snowman, turned the key in the ignition, turned on the headlight, and suddenly the snowman was on the bike and racing around the garden. For a second he stopped, the little boy jumped on behind him, and then, they were off.

* squirted - sprayed
* wound it up – brought to a state of tension
* tarpaulin – material used to cover and protect things
* summoning up – gathering
* ignition – a switch that activates a car or a motorbike
When they came back to the garden, the snowman found his legs had started to melt from the heat of the engine. He was dripping all over the place, as if he’d just come out of the bathtub. At that moment, the boy had another bright idea. Grabbing the snowman’s hand, he pulled him into the garage. Humming away in the corner was the big deep freezer. In a second, the snowman had jumped into the freezer, and in another second, the dripping had stopped. The little boy watched him lying there, and realized that an idea had come in to the snowman’s head. Without warning, the snowman climbed out of the freezer, and gripping the boy firmly by the hand, began to run. Out of the garage, out into the snow, out across the garden, faster and faster, bounding and jumping, until suddenly the boy realized that they were... flying!

They landed silently in the frozen north. They were in the middle of a great forest of pine trees laden with snow. But somewhere ahead they could hear music and see lights. There in a clearing of the forest, Christmas party was taking place, and all the people at the party were snowmen. More snowmen than you could ever imagine in your life! And there, right in the middle of them, radiating good cheer and smiling from ear to ear, was Father
Christmas himself. “You’re just in time for the dance of the snowmen”, he chuckled, and clicked his fingers.

When the party was over, Father Christmas led the boy and the snowman to see a stable. Light spilled through the door, and inside they could see the reindeer which he used to pull his sleigh. Father Christmas gave the boy a lovely blue scarf as a present, and he put it on. It was time for them to go. The snowman gripped the boy’s hand, and once again they started to run, faster and faster, bounding and jumping, until they were flying.

At last, they landed in the garden again, and together walked slowly to the house. The little boy shook hands with the snowman and went up to the front door. But the snowman waved and the boy ran back and gave him a great big hug. Then the boy went indoors, and very soon was fast asleep.

Next morning, when he woke, the room was ablaze with sunlight. He put on his dressing gown, ran downstairs, and opened the front door. The sun felt warm on his face. The boy ran out into the garden and saw... a little heap of melted snow, an old hat, a tangerine, a scarf, and a few lumps of coal, but the snowman was nowhere to be seen. For a moment, he thought

\*chuckled – laughed quietly
\*gripped - grabbed
\*ablaze – brightly shining, as if in flames
\*dressing gown - robe
\*heap – pile, stack
that the adventures of the night before had been nothing but a dream. But then he felt in his pocket, and the scarf that Father Christmas had given him was still there.